

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-60. (Cancelled).

61. (New) A transaction management system for managing the purchase of an item and/or service by a buyer from a seller, wherein at least some sellers are associated with agencies, the system comprising:

a plurality of agency data stores, each for storing agency data comprising:
seller data for each of a plurality of sellers associated with the agency; and
indication data for indicating whether the agency is prepared to offer sellers associated with the agency to buyers associated with other agencies and the terms of any such offer;

a program store storing processor implementable instructions; and
a processor coupled to the agency data store and to the program store for implementing the stored instructions; wherein the stored instructions comprise instructions for controlling the processor to:

implement a buyer interface to receive a purchase inquiry from a buyer;
output seller offer data to the buyer for a plurality of sellers, wherein the seller offer data presented to the buyer takes into account the terms of said offer of sellers associated with an agency to buyers associated with other agencies;

receive a purchase request from the buyer accepting a said offer; and
implement a seller interface to output the purchase request to the identified seller for requesting purchase of a service or item; and ascertain compliance data for determining whether the identified seller is willing or able to comply with the buyer purchase request.

62. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the purchase request comprises request data indicating a service or item of commerce requested by the buyer.

63. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising means for storing seller data comprising, for each of a plurality of sellers not associated with any agency, a seller identifier and seller offer data indicating at least one service or item of commerce offered for sale.

64. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein, for a seller offering services for sale, the seller data in the general data store further comprises an availability diary for the seller.

65. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the stored instructions comprise instructions for controlling the processor to:

output seller offer data from the agency with which the buyer is associated; and

output seller offer data from other agencies when the agency with which the buyer is associated accepts the terms of the offer of seller from the other agencies.

66. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the stored instructions comprise instructions for controlling the processor to output seller offer data from other agencies only when insufficient offers are available from the agency with which the buyer is associated.

67. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the stored instructions comprise instructions for controlling the processor to output seller offer data in an order based on factors including a ranking given to the other agencies.

68. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processor comprises means for calculating the price by adding to the seller price, the commission of the agency with which the buyer is associated, a part of this commission being paid to the agency with which the seller is associated under the terms of the offer from the agency with which the seller is associated to the agency with which the buyer is associated.

69. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising means for calculating the price and determining if the commission to be paid to the agency with which the seller is associated is greater than commission of the agency with which the buyer is associated, and if so removing the offer from the seller offer data.

70. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the stored instructions comprise a software module for allowing negotiation between agencies of the terms under which sellers associated with one agency are offered to buyers associated with the other agency.

71. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the stored instructions comprise a software module for automatic acceptance of terms under which sellers associated with one agency are offered to buyers associated with the other agency, when these terms meet predetermined criteria.

72. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising means for determining payments between agencies when a seller transfers between the agencies.

73. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising means for determining the division of commission payments between a plurality of agencies with which a buyer or a seller is associated.

74. (New) A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the agency data store further comprises data relating to agreements between three or more agencies in which one agency acts as intermediary between two others.

75. (New) A method for managing the purchase of an item and/or service by a buyer from a seller, wherein at least some sellers are associated with agencies, the method comprising:

storing in an agency data store seller data for each of a plurality of sellers associated with the agency, and indication data for indicating whether the agency is prepared

to offer sellers associated with the agency to buyers associated with other agencies and the terms of any such offer;

implementing a buyer interface for receiving a purchase inquiry from a buyer;
outputting seller offer data to the buyer for a plurality of sellers, wherein the seller offer data presented to the buyer takes into account the terms of said offer of sellers associated with an agency to buyers associated with other agencies;

receiving a purchase request from the buyer accepting a said offer;

implementing a seller interface to output the purchase request to the identified seller for requesting purchase of a service or item; and

ascertaining compliance data for determining whether the identified seller is willing or able to comply with the buyer purchase request.

76. (New) A method claimed in claim 15, wherein the purchase request comprises request data indicating a service or item of commerce requested by the buyer.

77. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:
storing seller data comprising, for each of a plurality of sellers not associated with any agency, a seller identifier and seller offer data indicating at least one service or item of commerce offered for sale.

78. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:
storing seller data comprising, for each of a plurality of sellers associated with another agency, a seller identifier, seller offer data indicating at least one service or item of commerce offered for sale, and data indicating the agency with which the seller is associated.

79. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:
storing buyer data identifying, for each of a plurality of buyers associated with an agency, data indicating the agency with which the buyer is associated.

80. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising, for a seller offering services for sale, creating an availability diary for the seller.

81. (New) A method as claimed in any one of claim 15, further comprising generating historical data relating to the previous seller performance in response to purchase requests associated with the seller.

82. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the seller offer data is output to the buyer, and the acceptance of a purchase request is received from the buyer, without reference to the seller.

83. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein outputting seller offer data comprises:

outputting seller offer data from the agency with which the buyer is associated;

and

outputting seller offer data from other agencies when the agency with which the buyer is associated accepts the terms of the offer of seller from the other agencies.

84. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein outputting seller offer data from other agencies is carried out only when insufficient offers are available from the agency with which the buyer is associated.

85. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein outputting seller offer data comprises generating a list in an order based on factors including a ranking given to the other agencies.

86. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising determining if the commission to be paid to the agency with which the seller is associated is greater than commission of the agency with which the buyer is associated, and if so removing the offer from the seller offer data.

87. (New) A method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising determining payments between agencies when a seller transfers between the agencies.

88. (New) A buyer terminal for a buyer to remotely purchase a service or item from a seller via an intermediary system, the buyer being associated with an agency, the terminal comprising:

a data memory operable to store data to be processed;

a program store for storing processor implementable instructions;

a communications interface for receiving data from and transmitting data to the intermediary system; and

a processor, coupled to the data memory and to the program store for implementing the stored instructions, and to the communications interface for receiving and storing instructions for the processor in the program store;

and wherein, in use, the program store stores instructions for controlling the processor to:

implement a buyer interface to receive a purchase inquiry from a buyer;

receive seller data comprising, for each of a plurality of sellers, seller offer data indicating at least one service or item of commerce offered for sale relating to the purchase inquiry, the seller offer data presented to the buyer including sellers associated with other agencies and taking into account the terms under which said other agencies offer their sellers to the agency with which the buyer is associated;

generate a user interface to output said seller offer data and to receive a purchase request from the buyer accepting a said offer; and

transmit the purchase request to the intermediary system.

89. (New) A method for using a buyer terminal to remotely purchase a service or item from a seller via an intermediary system, the buyer being associated with an agency, the method comprising:

using the buyer terminal to make a purchase inquiry;

receiving seller data comprising, for each of a plurality of sellers, seller offer data indicating at least one service or item of commerce offered for sale relating to the purchase inquiry;

generating a user interface to output said seller offer data and receive a purchase request from the buyer accepting a said offer, the seller offer data presented to the buyer

including sellers associated with other agencies and taking into account the terms under which said other agencies offer their sellers to the agency with which the buyer is associated; and transmitting the purchase request to the intermediary system.

90. (New) A method of supplying goods and/or services from a buyer to a seller via an intermediary, the method comprising:

- logging details of goods/services on offer from a plurality of sellers;
- recording which sellers are associated with agencies;
- recording which buyers are associated with agencies;
- recording which agencies are prepared to offer sellers associated with the agency to buyers associated with other agencies and the terms of any such offers;
- receiving a purchase inquiry from a buyer;
- presenting seller offer data to the buyer which takes into account the terms of any said offers;
- receiving a purchase request from the buyer accepting a said offer;
- providing the purchase request to the identified seller; and
- ascertaining compliance data for determining whether the identified seller is willing or able to comply with the buyer purchase request.